

teaching a "Problems in Government" class for the Daviess community. Students in the class followed Buzz' example and plunged into the politics of local concerns, impacting decisions about topics such as highways and downtown revitalization.

Buzz Norris left his mark on Daviess County, and I have no doubt he will continue to contribute his time, effort and energy to the community for many years to come. I thank Buzz for his service to Kentucky, and I am confident my colleagues join me in my commendation of his work.●

AIRLINE PASSENGER FAIRNESS ACT OF 1999

● Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my strong support for the Airline Passenger Fairness Act. I commend Senators WYDEN and MCCAIN for bringing this crucial consumer issue before the Senate in a bipartisan manner. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this bill.

Mr. President, I'm sure that each and every one of us in this body has experienced his or her fair share of frustration with air travel. Whether it's late flights, bad meals, long lines, or lost luggage, we've all gotten the short end of the stick at one point or another.

When it comes to air travel, we are all consumers. And this bill assures the protection of consumer interests. The Airline Passenger Fairness Act would ensure that passengers have the information that they need to make informed choices in their air travel plans. Given the recent spate of airlines' customer relations debacles, I hope this bill will also encourage some of them to treat their customers with more respect.

Mr. President, financial statements and the stock market don't lie. Most airlines have been experiencing years of exploding growth and record profits. Unfortunately, some employees and consumers have not shared in the boom. While this bill doesn't address all consumer concerns, it does move us forward in a constructive manner.

Mr. President, it's probably about time air travelers' interests received our attention. According to the Department of Transportation, consumer complaints about air travel shot up by more than 25 percent last year. Those complaints run the gamut from ephemeral ticket pricing; being sold a ticket on already oversold flights; lost luggage; and flight delays, changes, and cancellations. This bill addresses these issues and more.

Perhaps of more importance, this bill does so without forcing airlines to compile information that they don't already keep. The bill simply allows air travelers the right to that basic information and the ability to make informed decisions.

Mr. President, I am fortunate to represent and be a customer of the na-

tion's premier airline when it comes to customer satisfaction. For years, Midwest Express Airlines has enjoyed some of the highest airline customer satisfaction ratings in the country. For those of my colleagues who haven't had the pleasure to ride on Midwest Express, I, and I'm sure I speak for the senior Senator from Wisconsin, encourage you to do so.

Mr. President, Midwest Express maintains those superlative ratings because it already incorporates some of the provisions spelled out in this bill. Midwest Express already tries to notify its travelers if it anticipates a flight delay, flight change, or flight cancellation. The airline already attempts to make information on oversold flights available to its customers. Midwest Express already makes efforts to allow its customers access to frequent flyer program information.

These are some of the reasons the airline has been awarded the Consumer Reports Travel Letter Best Airline Award every year from 1992 to 1998; Zagat Airline Survey's #1 Domestic Airline award in 1994 and 1996; Travel & Leisure's World's Best Awards for Best Domestic Airline in 1997 and 1998; and Conde Nast Traveler's Business Travel Awards for Best U.S. Airline in 1998, among many awards.

Mr. President, other airlines should see this bill as a challenge to meet the lofty standards set by airlines like Midwest Express.

Mr. President, air travel is on the rise, but so are air travel complaints. This bill responds to the complaints by giving our constituents access to the information they need to make wise choices in air travel. Airlines truly concerned about their customers should already be making these efforts. As I noted, one Wisconsin-based airline is already making the effort. I urge my colleagues to join in this effort.●

EXXON VALDEZ OILSPILL

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, this month is the 10th anniversary of the infamous Exxon Valdez oilspill. On March 24, 1989, one of Exxon's largest tankers, under the command of a captain who had been drinking and had abandoned the bridge, struck Bligh Reef and spilled 11 million gallons of North Slope crude oil into the pristine waters of Prince William Sound.

The Exxon Valdez oilspill remains the largest man-made environmental disaster in American history. The oil spread almost 600 miles, harming wildlife, closing fisheries, and damaging the subsistence way of life of Alaska Natives living in the region. To its credit, Exxon spent as much as \$2-3 billion trying to rectify the effects of the spill, but much damage remains.

The spill brought home to all of us in the Pacific Northwest a deeper appreciation for the importance of pre-

venting oilspills. Clean water, a vibrant fishery, and abundant wildlife are all parts of our Northwest way of life, and they are all at risk to oilspills.

In Commerce Committee hearings shortly after the spill, I told the Exxon CEO that a Japanese CEO would have been expected to resign after such a calamity. I said this not to be unkind, but because of my strongly-held view that oilspills caused by a company's reckless conduct cannot be tolerated.

It is now 10 years later, and Exxon is ready to move on. It has announced its intention to merge with Mobil, creating the largest corporation in the world, with annual revenues of over \$180 billion.

The federal government is in the process of reviewing this proposed merger. I object to the merger of Exxon and Mobil unless Exxon first resolves some important unfinished business resulting from the 1989 spill. That unfinished business is the litigation brought by the tens of thousands of fishermen, small business owners, and Alaska Natives who were harmed by the spill.

About 6,500 of these people live in Washington State. They, too, would like to move on with their lives, but they can't. They have been waiting ten years since the spill, and almost five years since a federal jury determined that Exxon should pay them over \$5 billion.

They will be waiting a lot longer if Exxon has its way. Every year of delay is worth about \$400 million to Exxon, the difference between the 6 percent interest rate on the \$5 billion judgment and Exxon's own rate of return of about 14 percent on the same \$5 billion. If this case drags on long enough, Exxon will be able to pay most of the jury verdict out of money that it made solely because of the delay in paying the judgment.

Exxon has appealed the jury verdict, raising a number of issues. This is to be expected in a case involving this much money. But while this case crawls through our court system, the victims are left waiting for closure to a horrible event that changed their lives forever, and they are waiting for a sense that justice has been done. We need to find a way to meet these perfectly understandable human needs. Exxon has the power and resources to make that happen.

We need to send the strongest possible message to Exxon and other oil companies: you use our waterways to transport your product, and you know the consequences if your product spills, so it is your duty to take every precaution. If you act recklessly, you will pay dearly.

That message is fading after 10 years, and will be largely lost after a merger of these proportions. Now, before the merger, we have an opportunity to make an indelible impression on what would be the largest corporation on